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AUTHOR	Minami, Masahiko
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ABSTRACT

In this research, using the "Frog, Where Are You?" picture book, 40 bilingual children age 6-12 years were asked to narrate the story in two languages, English and Japanese. Both quantitative and qualitative analyses were performed in order to study the relationship between the use of the two languages. The results generally suggest that those children who possessed competent literacy skills in Japanese (which is considered their first language) possessed equivalent literacy skills in English (which is considered their second language). The study, however, also reveals that the bilingual children used more words when telling narratives in English than in Japanese. The study further indicates that the bilingual children tended to provide more referential details (i.e., specific events) in English, whereas in Japanese, the same narrators tended to emphasize evaluative descriptions (i.e., statements that tell the listener what to think about a person, place, thing, event, or more globally, the entire experience described in the narrative). Recognizing the close relationship between culture and language, the study implies that bilinguals access different cultural systems in their minds when telling the same story in two languages. (Contains 33 references.) (SM)

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The Language Continuum:
Narrative Discourse Skills in English-Japanese Bilingual Children

Masahiko Minami

San Francisco State University

Author's Address: Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures

College of Humanities

San Francisco State University

1600 Holloway Avenue

San Francisco, CA 94132

E-Mail: mminami@sfsu.edu

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Abstract

A narrative is typically considered a series of events related in chronological order. Narrative studies have recognized the importance of universal properties of narrative structure in explaining patterns of language use among native and nonnative speakers alike. Telling a story, however, involves factors that reflect different cultural emphases in stories. For example, people from different cultural backgrounds might encode their own perspectives and emotions in different ways. Nevertheless, much of our understanding of children's narratives has been based on research with monolingual children. Far less work has been conducted on bilingual children. In this research, using the Frog, Where Are You? picture book (Mayer, 1969), 40 bilingual children, ages six to twelve, were asked to narrate the story in two languages, English and Japanese. Both quantitative and qualitative analyses were performed in order to study the relationship between the use of the two languages. The results generally suggest that those children who possessed competent literacy skills in Japanese (which is considered their first language) possessed equivalent literacy skills in English (which is considered their second language). The study, however, also revealed that the bilingual children used more words when telling narratives in English than in Japanese. The study further indicates that the bilingual children tended to provide more referential details (i.e., specific events) in English whereas, in Japanese, the same narrators tended to emphasize evaluative descriptions (i.e., statements that tell the listener what to think about a person, place, thing, event, or more globally, the entire experience described in the narrative). Recognizing the close relationship between culture and language, the study implies that bilinguals access different cultural systems in their minds when telling the same story in two languages.

The Language Continuum:

Narrative Discourse Skills in English-Japanese Bilingual Children

A strong connection exists between learning to talk and learning to read and write. Language studies during the past two decades have suggested that acquiring language skills should be regarded as a process interwoven with the intricacies of the continuum of orality and literacy. Conversational language skills differ from literacy-related skills in some aspects, such as the distinction between context-embedded communication, which is typical of spoken language, and context-reduced language, which is a distinctive feature of written language (Olson, 1977; Torrance & Olson, 1985). At the same time, however, children grasp considerable literacy-related knowledge even as they acquire language. This can be observed in the development of children's narrative discourse skills and explanatory sequences of talk (Dickinson & McCabe, 1991; Ninio & Snow, 1996; Reese & Cox, 1999; Snow, 1983; Snow & Ninio, 1986).

If oral language skills at home are necessary precursors to later literacy skills in an educational context, the language continuum in those children speaking two languages becomes substantially complicated. According to Cummins (1980), Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS) is the ability to communicate well in everyday interpersonal/social contexts, whereas Cognitive/Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) is related to the higher-level language skills required for cognitively demanding tasks such as literacy. While BICS and CALP correspond respectively to oral language skills and literacy skills, they are not separate categories; instead, they form a continuum, and that continuum creates further complexity in understanding bilingual children's language skills development. In the United States, for example, because native languages are spoken in many language-minority homes, contextualized or context-embedded language skills (BICS) tend to develop in children's home languages, whereas decontextualized or context-reduced language skills (CALP) emerge and become distinctive in formal school settings where English is generally the medium of instruction.

While sounding somewhat contradictory, positive language transfer, which means the process of using knowledge of the first (or home) language when using the second (or school) language, is also probable. Cummins (1991) claims that although the surface features of different languages may look dissimilar, there exists an underlying cognitive proficiency that is common across different languages. This common underlying proficiency makes the transfer of literacy related skills from one language to another possible (Snow, 1990; Snow, Cancino, De Temple, & Schley, 1991). Following Cummins (1996), furthermore, verbal academic ability in bilingual children's first (or home) language is a significant predictor of the eventual level of verbal academic proficiency that they will attain in their second (or school) language.

Bilingual children, as they grow, seem to be facing much more challenging tasks than monolingual children. For instance, it is often said that bilingual children demonstrate vocabulary scores in each language that are below normal, particularly during the preschool years. This tendency seems to support the conceptualization that bilinguals are learning almost twice as many words in the same time frame as a monolingual (Snow, 1998). In school settings, moreover, Cummins (1991) suggests that although language-minority children in the United States may pick up English oral proficiency in a couple of years, they may need several additional years to acquire the language skills necessary to function successfully in an all-English classroom (note, however, that although children's second language acquisition is relatively slow and inefficient, such estimates might reflect the high end of the range). Similarly, Collier (1987) found that five-, six-, and seven-year-old arrivals in the United States, because of limited literacy skills in their first language, tended not to acquire adequate English academic skills compared to older arrivals who could transfer their knowledge of reading from their native language to reading in English. When second-language acquisition is understood as a composite of cognitive development and proficiency in the first language,

prematurely mainstreamed students seem to run the risk of being diagnosed as slow, disabled, or even retarded because of their language handicap.

In this sense, storytelling offers an appropriate lens through which to study not only monolingual but also bilingual children's language skills development. To begin with, storytelling is a social act; narratives are a communicatively driven form of discourse in that individuals tell stories to one another and not to themselves (Labov, 1972; Stavans, 1996). Secondly, orality and literacy interpenetrate and form an intricate continuum in everyday language use. Individuals of all ages as well as cultural and linguistic backgrounds need to narrate in order to communicate; children need storytelling ability in order to become accomplished readers and writers (Halliday, 1994; McCabe, 1996).

As a matter of fact, an increasingly well-explored area of children's language acquisition is the development of storytelling skills, or the development of narrative discourse skills in a broad sense. Believing that the process of language acquisition should be analyzed in the context of narrative discourse, Bamberg (1987) and Berman and Slobin (1994) pioneered the use of frog (or picture) stories and created a context in which, whatever language they spoke, all the subjects recounted the same events. Aside from its use in areas not germane to this study, such as the learning of American Sign Language, and in research connected with language (developmental) impairment (McIntire & Reilly, 1996), the main focus of the use of the frog story has been in studies on first language acquisition. More generally, much of our understanding of children's narratives has been based on research with monolingual children. Far less work using this technique has been conducted with bilinguals, and, as a result, we know much less about how narratives are told by bilinguals. Designed to address some of these gaps in the literature, the present study analyzes narratives produced in a picture-book reading task by English-Japanese bilingual children. The study addresses the following two key questions, which particularly deal with two distinct linguistic levels, the lexicon and the content-focus narrative discourse:

1) What, if any, differences in lexicons and narrative styles are found between English and Japanese in bilingual children?
2) What do these possible differences suggest about the relationships between the two languages?

As can easily be inferred, the above questions, in one way or another, relate to linguistic relativity generally known as the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis (Whorf, 1956). The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis suggests that speakers of different languages think differently because of the differences in their languages. By comparing lexical differences and linguistic—more specifically, narrative discursive—behavior, this study examines whether "Bilinguals possess relatively separate linguistic codes between the two languages" or "There is a common underlying code in a bilingual's mind" [the latter is, in part, related to the underlying cognitive proficiency suggested by Cummins (1991)].

Method

Participants

Participants were forty Japanese-speaking school-age children residing in the multilingual San Francisco area. There were seventeen boys and twenty-three girls, ages six to twelve. The subject children, whose mothers are all Japanese originally from Japan, were either enrolled in bilingual programs in public elementary schools or attending Japanese language classes on weekends as well as public elementary schools. Although all the children were considered to be balanced bilinguals, the Bilingual Verbal Ability Tests (Muñoz-Sandoval, Cummins, Alvarado, & Ruef, 1998), which will be described later, was used as an additional screening measure. (Note that all the children's names in this study are pseudonyms.)

Task, Procedure, and Materials

There are advantages and potential disadvantages of involving bilinguals in research. First, when the effects of language on an individual's behaviors, cognition, or

emotions are examined using bilinguals, potential individual or membership differences, which might confound the results, could possibly be eliminated. When comparisons are made between two groups of monolingual participants (e.g., a group of Japanese-speaking children and another group of English-speaking children), the constituent members of each group are different individuals. Minami and McCabe (1995), for example, reported that Japanese children tended to tell concise stories whereas North American children tended to tell lengthy stories (this issue will be revisited later in this paper). However, even if cross-cultural or cross-linguistic differences are identified between the two groups, because the same individuals are not the members of the both groups, those differences might be attributable to the specific constituency of each group. Using bilinguals, therefore, could eliminate the inherent confounding factor of membership differences and, therefore, has considerable methodological advantages.

One of the critical requirements in a study using bilinguals, however, is that the degree of equivalence between languages of comparison should be established. There are those who acquired two languages simultaneously from birth, but for many bilinguals, one of the two languages they speak is the first or native language, whereas the other is the language that they acquired later in life. To make matters more complicated, a great number of bilinguals tend to be more fluent in one language than the other. Such differences in the degree of proficiency might confound the results obtained and consequently preclude conclusive comparisons in research on bilinguals.

With the above issues in mind, in order to predict the academic progress of those children, two separate tasks were designed and conducted: (1) the Bilingual Verbal Ability Tests (BVAT) and (2) storytelling activities. First of all, to measure each individual child's bilingual verbal ability, the BVAT was administered. Then, the subjects were asked to engage in storytelling activities in both English and their native language, Japanese in this case. (Recall that the mothers of all subject children are Japanese from Japan and their native language is Japanese; regardless of the children's Japanese language

proficiency, therefore, in this study the children's first language was considered Japanese). In this narrative construction task, children were asked to look at and describe a sequence of pictures in both their home (or native) language and the target language (i.e., English).

BVAT. The BVAT contains three sections to measure different aspects of verbal cognitive ability: (1) picture vocabulary, (2) oral vocabulary, and (3) verbal analogies. The picture vocabulary task is at a single-word level that requires the subject to name a pictured object. This expressive task is arranged by presenting familiar objects (e.g., star, shoe, spoon) and then gradually moving to less familiar objects (e.g., stethoscope, pendulum, turnstile). The oral vocabulary task examines knowledge of word meanings. The task is further divided into two subsections: synonyms (in which the subject is expected to answer with a word similar in meaning to the word presented) and antonyms (in which the subject is expected to answer with a word opposite in meaning to the word presented). Examples of synonyms include: angry-mad, small-little, and look-see. Examples of antonyms are: no-yes, out-in, and happy-sad. The verbal analogies task measures verbal reasoning. The subject is expected to comprehend and complete a logical word relationship, such as "A bird flies; a fish . . ." and "Hungry is to eat, as tired is to . . . ." Like the picture vocabulary task, both the oral vocabulary and verbal analogies tasks become increasingly difficult and complex.

A bilingual is not the sum of two separate individuals. The developers of the BVAT (Muñoz-Sandoval, Cummins, Alvarado, & Ruef, 1998) therefore claim that vocabulary size should be regarded as the total of (1) the amount of English vocabulary plus (2) the amount of first language vocabulary that is not part of the individual's vocabulary in English. Following the general procedure, the English BVAT was administered first, followed by missed items in the first language in order to determine whether the subject possessed a vocabulary item that he or she had missed in English. In other words, the standard design of the BVAT is that any item that had been missed in English is then administered in Japanese. If the individual identifies that item in Japanese,

it is added to the score, so that the end result can reflect the individual's knowledge in both languages.

Although the standard use of the BVAT described above might present a more complete picture of verbal ability than the conventional procedure (which solely relies on English verbal ability), in this research the BVAT was used in a slightly different manner than had originally been intended. Unlike the standard procedure, we asked the subject children to answer all the items both in English and in Japanese. By examining the relationship in the vocabulary usage between English and Japanese, we believed that we could see whether or not they were balanced bilinguals. The purpose of using the BVAT in this study was, therefore, for recruiting and screening participants as well as for establishing equivalency in language proficiency.

Picture-book Reading. Comparability across narrators in terms of both content and language was the key factor in the decision to use elicited narratives in this study. Because the primary goal of this study was to identify how bilingual children tell stories in the two different languages, we asked the subject children to tell the same event sequence in English and Japanese. Topically similar personal narratives, such as those collected by researchers adopting content-based analyses (e.g., Labov, 1972; Minami & McCabe, 1991; Peterson & McCabe, 1983), could address in part the advantage of having different people talk about similar things. In a strict sense, however, personal narratives are never identical; instead, they differ in experience, which might influence or even jeopardize equivalency among narratives told by different narrators. In this study, therefore, although still being based on content-based analysis, we asked the subjects to tell narratives in which the sequence of events was controlled.

The participants were asked to narrate the story in the 24-page textless children's picture book, Frog Where Are You? (Mayer, 1969). The plotline is developed in the actions taken by two main characters—a boy and his pet dog—as well as his pet frog and a variety of minor characters, such as bees, an owl, a deer, and a mole. The book first

depicts the boy, his pet dog, and the frog happy together. At night, while the boy and the dog are asleep, the frog escapes. The next morning, the boy and the dog discover that the frog has disappeared, and they begin to look for the frog. During their search, the boy and the dog encounter several obstacles and are involved in several adventures. Eventually, the boy and the dog find their frog with a mate and baby frogs, and return home happily with one of the baby frogs in the boy's hand. Within this goal-directed sequence, there are brief digressions, such as the dog getting a jar stuck on his head, falling out of a window, and shattering the jar.

In this study, the participants were first allowed to look through the pictures, page by page in sequence, to become familiar with the plot. They were then asked to narrate the story with the support of the pictures, first in English and then in Japanese or vice versa. As noted earlier, one advantage of this technique is that uniformity of the content is assured across all narrators who participated in this study. Another advantage is that the frog story is a cognitively challenging but suitable task for child narrators. As described above, a little boy searches for a frog through various locations—looking into a hole on the ground, climbing up cliffs, falling down, and calling to the frog in a loud voice. The complicated actions taken by the boy, the dog, and the various other characters, successively as well as simultaneously, are ideal for eliciting narrative talk. Because the plotline moves not only from place to place but also from time to time, it requires the narrator to provide causal and temporal descriptions by carefully tracking the referents across scenes. Therefore, how children build up connections to express the different parts can be observed clearly by narrating this frog story.

As a final note, because the same children narrated the same story in both English and Japanese, counter-balancing was critical in this bilingual research. One half of the children who participated in this project were asked to narrate the entire story in English first and then in Japanese, whereas the other half narrated the entire story in Japanese first and then in English. This counter-balancing was supposed to cancel out the effect of

order of presentation to some extent. The children's narratives were audio-taped, and the CHAT format from the CHILDES system was used for transcription (MacWhinney & Snow, 1990).

Coding

As mentioned earlier, a content-based analysis, which is closely associated with the work of Labov (1972), was employed in this study. An important feature of the Labovian methodology is the distinction between two types of elements, which are both indispensable for an ideal narrative: (1) referential elements and (2) evaluative (or affective) elements. The referential elements convey information about the characters and events in the story. Evaluative elements, in contrast, convey the narrator's attitudes toward events and his or her interpretations of the protagonists' motives and reactions to events. The referential elements are further categorized into orientation and action, and this sub-categorization makes the relationship between the narrative elements a little complicated. Orientations are statements in which the narrator provides the listener with contextual embedding of the narrative, such as the setting, character referents, time, features of environment, conditions, and ongoing behavior in the narrative. On the other hand, actions are specific actions/events or processes that take place. In other words, actions serve to move the plotline forward and thus give sequential, foreground information, whereas orientations provide contextualizing, nonsequential information of the story. Therefore, orientations, like evaluative elements, convey background information (Hopper, 1979; Hopper & Thompson, 1980). Examples of the important narrative components are as follows (Note: "Coda," another category that appears at the end of the main body of the narrative, is also included in the present analysis.):

(1) Action (referential element providing foreground information)

kaeru ga nigeta.

'The frog ran away.'

(2) Orientation (referential element providing background information)

otoko no ko to inu ga okita toki.

'When the boy and the dog woke up.'

(3) Evaluation (evaluative/affective element providing background information)

otoko no ko wa mada okotteta.

'The boy was still angry.'

(4) Coda (the "sealing off" of a narrative)

owari.

'The end.'

Reliability

The stories obtained were transcribed verbatim and coded by three individuals who are bilingual in Japanese and English and familiar with the current coding system. Cohen's Kappa measure of reliability (Landis & Koch, 1977) was .98 for the coding of the Japanese data, whereas it was .99 for the English coding.

Results

BVAT

Using the BVAT, the relationships between the two languages in terms of the three language proficiency sections (Picture Vocabulary, Oral Vocabulary, and Verbal Analogies) were quantitatively analyzed. As can be seen in Table 1 below, the children's English vocabulary usage was highly correlated with their vocabulary usage in Japanese, particularly in the corresponding measurements (see from the upper left to the lower right shown in bold). Take, for example, a look at the highest correlation between the two languages; those children who demonstrated superior performance in the English verbal analogies task also demonstrated superior performance in the Japanese verbal analogies task, $r(38) = .80$, $p < .0001$. Conversely, scores obtained in the Japanese tasks, whether high or low, were mirrored in the scores of the corresponding English tasks. The positive

associations between English and Japanese in the BVAT scores, therefore, revealed that the subject children were balanced bilinguals (see Table 1 below).

Table 1

Correlations between English and Japanese in Three Verbal Ability Related Tasks

	English Picture Vocabulary	English Oral Vocabulary	English Verbal Analogies
Japanese Picture Vocabulary	**.35***	.27	-.10
Japanese Oral Vocabulary	-.23	**.33***	.33*
Japanese Verbal Analogies	-.04	.56***	**.80****

*p < .05 **p < .01 ***p < .001 ****p < .0001

Frog Stories: Vocabulary (Lexicon) and Clauses

Qualitative analysis. When we look at the children's narrative production on a particular page or pages, we can observe different strategies. Below, by controlling for content (Pictures 10 and 11), four seemingly different strategies were identified. The case in which children used literal equivalents with similar sentence structures seems the simplest one. Interestingly, Keigo, for instance, did not use any name for the animal inside a hole; instead, he simply addressed it as a "small animal" in both languages although he did not narrate this particular page consecutively in the two languages (i.e., Keigo narrated the entire story in Japanese first and then narrated the entire story in English later). Keigo's strategy might suggest that a common underlying cognitive system is working in a bilingual's mind.

Pattern A: Lexical and syntactic correspondence

Keigo (boy; age 9 years, 7 months)

English: Suddenly, from the hole there was a **little animal**.

Japanese: kyuuni ana n naka kara **chiisai doobutsu** ga mietekite.

'Suddenly, from the hole a little animal came to be seen.'

Kenta (boy; age 9 years, 6 months)

English: And it was the **groundhog**'s hole.

Japanese: **guraundo hoggu** no ana deshita.

'It was a groundhog's hole.'

The above seemingly simplest correspondence, however, did not always happen. The bilingual narrators, in some cases, while maintaining syntactically similar patterns, used slightly different words when describing the same scene.

Pattern B: Syntactic correspondence with similar (but slightly different) lexical choices

Genki (boy; age 9 years, 4 months)

English: The boy looked into a **gopher**'s hole.

Japanese: otoko no ko wa **mogura** no ana o mite.

'The boy looked into a mole's hole.'

Koharu (girl; age 6 years, 11 months)

English: The **beehive** fell down.

Japanese: **hachi no uchi** ga ochimashita.

'The **bees' house** fell down.'

Pattern B is reasonable because bilingual children do not possess a precise English-Japanese or Japanese-English dictionary in their minds that says that the Japanese equivalent of the English word "mole" is "mogura," for example. Whether they are conscious of it or not, when bilinguals translate an English word into its literal equivalent in Japanese or vice versa, they assume that the two words mean roughly the same. Furthermore, even though Koharu might not have had the exact Japanese word corresponding to the English "beehive," she could describe it as a "hachi no uchi (bees' house)" in Japanese. Koharu used her metalinguistic ability (the ability to reflect upon one's own language use and knowledge) or metacognitive skills effectively. Because using

exact literal equivalents is rare, Patterns A and B clearly form a continuum, or are even identical in bilinguals' minds.

Syntactic differences were also observed. Some narrators constructed different sentence structures although they used words similar in meaning to the words they had used in the other language when describing the same scene.

Pattern C: Lexical correspondence with different syntactic structures

Miho (girl; age 9 months, 2 months)

English: The boy saw a **skunk** in the hole.

Japanese: **sukanku** ga imashita.

'There was a skunk.'

Sayuri (girl; age 11 years, 10 months)

English: The boy found out that the hole was a mole, **mole**'s hole.

Japanese: to, sakki otokonoko ga mita tsuchi no naka ni wa **mogura** ga ita.

'In the ground the boy had looked into just before, there was a mole.'

While assuming that all the strategies that the bilingual narrators deployed form a continuum, the opposite of Pattern A is that children described a particular scene in one language, completely ignoring the same scene in the other language. Interestingly, in this extreme case, bilingual narrators often omitted Japanese equivalents.

Pattern D: No correspondence (a particular scene was not described in Japanese)

Hiro (boy; age 9 years, 1 month)

English: A **gopher** came out of the hole.

Mai (girl; age 11 years, 11 months)

English: And then a **groundhog** came out of the hole and then bees came out of the beehive.

Mika (girl; age 7 years, 8 months)

English: The boy, the boy call his frog's name in the hole and the dog try to catch the beehive and when the boy know, it was the, it was the **chipmunks**.

Kahori (girl; age 9 years, 6 months)

English: And looks into the hole, then and a **mole** came out, and the dog is, and the dog is barking at the bee beehive.

Quantitative Analysis. To examine whether the characteristic features in the examples shown above are true of other narratives told by bilingual children, the lexical relationships between English and Japanese were examined quantitatively. Table 2 displays correlations between equivalent (and related) measures in English and Japanese. When reading the table from the upper left to the lower right, a pattern of positive correlations emerges between equivalent measures in the activities using the two different languages (as shown in bold letters): (1) quantity and variety—the greater the number and variety of words the narrator used when telling a story in one language, the more words and greater variety of words he or she would use when telling the same story in the other language; (2) length—the longer the narrator told a story in one language, the longer he or she would tell the same story in the other language. We seem to be able to conclude: (1) Those who had a larger vocabulary size in one language were likely to have a larger vocabulary size in the other language. (2) Similarly, those who were capable of telling a longer story in one language were likely to be capable of producing a longer story in the other language. Here, I should note that, in this cross-sectional study, it was not only difficult to infer chronological development, but as it also turned out, "age" was not a good predictor for analyzing the bilingual children's narrative development. In terms of

lexicons and the lengths of narratives, for instance, older children did not necessarily produce longer narratives or use more vocabulary.

Table 2

Between Language Correlations: Correlations between Total Number of Words (TNW), Total Number of Different Words (TNDW), and Total Number of Clauses (TNC) across the Two Languages

	English TNW	English TNDW	English TNC
Japanese TNW	**.91******	.87****	.91****
Japanese TNDW	.87****	**.86******	.88****
Japanese TNC	.88****	.84****	**.91******

$^{****}p < .0001$

Comparisons of mean scores by t tests, however, showed that, in terms of the total number of words, the bilingual children performed differently between English and Japanese. Table 3 presents the means and standard deviations of the total number of words, the total number of different words, and the total number of clauses that the narrators used when telling frog stories in the two languages. The narrators produced a larger total number of words when telling a story in English than they did when telling the same story in Japanese, $t(39) = 4.73$, $p < .0001$. Recall Minami and McCabe's (1995) claim that, in comparison with North American children's narratives, Japanese children's narratives are concise. Although the lengths of the narratives were almost identical between English and Japanese, the children participated in this study used more words when telling narratives in English than in Japanese. The results obtained in this study (which used bilinguals and thus removed the effect of group membership differences), at least in part, supports Minami and McCabe's contention.

Table 3

Between Language Comparisons: Total Number of Words (TNW), Total Number of Different Words (TNDW), and Total Number of Clauses (TNC) across the Two Languages

	English (n = 40)		Japanese (n = 40)		
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*t* values
TNW	251.45	111.21	216.93	110.91	4.73****
TNDW	89.40	25.07	85.85	32.09	1.34
TNC	39.68	14.69	40.00	17.24	0.29

****$p < .0001$

Frog Stories: Narrative Structure (Content-Based Analysis)

Qualitative analysis. Recall that a narrative consists of two important elements: referential and affective (or evaluative). The referential element, which conveys information about events and characters, is further divided into two components: actions and orientation. Actions, which depict the sequence of specific, chronologically ordered events comprising the experience, provide sequential, foreground information. Orientation, like the evaluative element and unlike specific actions, provides nonsequential, background information, such as information about people, place(s), time(s), and situation(s).

It appears that, to describe a particular scene, the bilingual children deployed similar narrative components in English and Japanese. In the example below, Ayako used exactly the same narrative component (i.e., action) to describe Picture 21 in English and Japanese.

Ayako (girl; age 7 years, 0 month)

English: And then they looked behind the trees.

Japanese: sorede sono nan no ushiro o mitara.

'And then they looked behind that.'

Obviously, in many cases the children provided differing degrees of detail in the two languages. Describing Pictures 4 and 5, Hanayo included the boy's changing clothes in Japanese, whereas she did not do so in English.

Hanayo (girl; age 11 years, 1 month)

English: He chased him, looked out the window, and called, but he wasn't there.

Japanese: **sugu ni kigaete**, sagashi ni ikoo to shimashita. mado kara yondemo, imasendeshita.

'**He changed his clothes**, and tried to look for (the frog) right away. Though he called out from the window, (the frog) was not there.'

What appears to be a distinctive difference between English and Japanese is that the bilingual children tended to include more evaluations in Japanese than in English when describing the same scene. For example, Kenji provided an additional evaluative comment (reasoning) when describing Picture 9 in Japanese, whereas he did not do so in English.

Kenji (boy; age 12 years, 6 months)

English: And he found a hole, so he started calling for the frog in the hole.

Japanese: yondemo, **mitsukaranai node**, ana no naka yondemimashita.

'Even though he called out, **because he couldn't find (the frog)**, he started calling (for the frog) in the hole.'

Quantitative analysis. To examine whether the characteristic features in the above examples are true of other narratives told by the bilingual children, narrative elements—referential and evaluative—were examined quantitatively in the context of storytelling activities. Table 4 compares the referential and evaluative elements in both languages,

using raw and proportional frequencies. The narratives produced by the bilingual children included: (1) more referential elements when narrating in English than when narrating in Japanese, and (2) more evaluative elements when narrating in Japanese than when narrating in English.

Table 4

Between Language Comparisons: Narrative Elements (Raw and Proportional Frequencies)

	English (n = 40)		Japanese (n = 40)		
	M	SD	M	*SD*	t values
Referential					
Raw	27.85	7.14	26.33	9.60	1.74
Proportion	72.95%	11.38	67.19%	10.00	3.92***
Evaluative					
Raw	11.45	9.20	13.40	9.19	3.01**
Proportion	27.05%	11.38	32.81%	0.10	3.92***

**$p < .01$ ***$p < .001$

The referential elements were then further divided into two components: orientation ('Who, when, where, what?') and action ('Then, what happened?'). When we read Table 5 from the upper left to the lower right (as shown in bold letters), we realize that each narrative component in one language is positively associated with its equivalent component in the other language. For example, those children who provided a substantial amount of actions in English also provided a substantial amount of actions in Japanese, $r(38) = .59$, $p < .0001$. In this way, significant positive correlations between English and Japanese were identified in the narrative components.

Table 5

Between Language Correlations: Correlations between English and Japanese in Narrative Components (Raw Frequencies)

	English Action	English Orientation	English Evaluation	English Coda
Japanese Action	**.59******	.56***	.61***	-.12
Japanese Orientation	.30	**.38***	.36*	.10
Japanese Evaluation	.52**	.34*	**.90*****	.03
Japanese Coda	-.05	.02	.18	**.57*****

$^{*}p < .05$ $^{**}p < .01$ $^{***}p < .001$ $^{****}p < .0001$

Comparisons of mean scores by t tests, however, yielded the following salient contrasts: (1) In terms of raw frequencies, the Japanese narratives included more evaluations, $t(39) = 2.67$, $p < .05$, but fewer codas, $t(39) = 2.21$, $p < .05$ (see Table 6). (2) In terms of proportional frequencies, the Japanese narratives included fewer actions, $t(39) = 2.67$, $p < .05$, but more evaluations, $t(39) = 3.47$ (see Table 7). Thus, bilingual narrators emphasized different narrative components when telling the same story in the different languages.

Table 6

Between Language Comparisons: Narrative Components (Raw Frequencies)

	English ($n = 40$)		Japanese ($n = 40$)		
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*t* values
Action	20.60	5.49	19.00	6.94	1.75
Orientation	7.25	4.10	8.00	5.55	0.86
Evaluation	11.45	9.20	13.15	9.08	2.67*
Coda	0.43	0.59	0.25	0.44	2.21*

$^{*}p < .05$

Table 7

Between Language Comparisons: Narrative Components (Proportional Frequencies)

	English (n = 40)		Japanese (n = 40)		
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*t* values
Action	54%	13	48%	11	2.67*
Orientation	18%	9	19%	9	0.68
Evaluation	27%	11	32%	10	3.47**
Coda	1%	1	1%	2	2.01

*$p < .05$ **$p < .01$

Discussion

A narrative is typically considered to be a series of events related in chronological order. Narrative studies have recognized the importance of universal properties of narrative structure in explaining patterns of language use among native and nonnative speakers alike. Telling a story, however, involves factors that reflect different cultural emphases in stories. For example, people from different cultural backgrounds might encode their own perspectives and emotions in different ways.

The present study has explored language development in English-Japanese bilingual children. Both quantitative and qualitative analyses were performed in order to study the relationship between English and Japanese narratives told by bilingual children. The results obtained generally suggest that those children who possessed competent literacy skills in Japanese possessed equivalent literacy skills in English. The study, however, also revealed that the subject children used more words when telling narratives in English than in Japanese. The study further indicates that the bilingual children tended to provide more referential details (i.e., specific events) in English whereas, in Japanese, the same narrators tended to emphasize evaluative descriptions (i.e., statements that tell

the listener what to think about a person, place, thing, event, or more globally, the entire experience described in the narrative). This finding does not necessarily support Cummins' (1991) hypothesis of common underlying proficiency in terms of which narrative components were emphasized in each language. As far as the narrative skills are concerned, skills acquired in the first language do not automatically transfer to a second language. The results obtained in the study do not confirm previous narrative studies, either. In first language acquisition, the better an individual's narrative skills become, the more nonsequential information he or she adds to the narrative, in order to emphasize why he or she wants to tell the narrative (Berman & Slobin, 1994). In the present study, which examined bilinguals, "age" turned out not to be a good predictor for narrative development. That is, the study has not identified a relationship between an individual's narrative skills (which are generally associated with age) and the amount of background information he or she adds to the narrative.

The issues investigated in this paper are inevitably related to the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. Whorf (1956) hypothesized that the particular language one speaks affects the manner in which one perceives and thinks about the world. According to Berman and Slobin (1994), some of the strongest evidence to support the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis comes from studies of typological narrative discourse analysis. Regardless of whether we accept the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis or not, it seems true that language (narrative in this study) is a vehicle by which we bring our thoughts and meanings into order. In this sense, it might be better to express this idea in a converse way; culture has a pervasive influence on language. For example, it is well known that at least a small set of emotions share a universal base across all human cultures, and that they provide a base of similarity in all aspects of emotion. Building on this common base, culture exerts its influence in molding our emotional worlds, resulting in cultural differences as well as similarities (Matsumoto, 2000). Likewise, as Bloom (2000) aptly states, "Language allows us to express our thoughts and understand those of others—to become full-fledged members of the human

community" (p. 259). Therefore, in strong terms, we might claim that, from early childhood on, children acquire a specific worldview as they acquire language. Even in weaker terms, we might be able to maintain that, through interactions with others, children negotiate the meaning of the actions around them and learn how to embed it in language.

What is complicated here is that, when bilinguals acquire two languages, they inevitably do so in the context of two different cultures. Different languages make possible different ways of making sense of the world, but each language is encoded with culturally specific meanings. Individuals understand and use language differently depending on the cultural context or situation. We should take into account the potential conflict between home language use and school language use that further complicates the intricate language continuum in the case of bilinguals. Middle-class American culture, as can be seen in elementary school textbooks, tends to instruct the child to take an objective and analytical view of the story, the situation, and the actions of the characters in order to evaluate the effectiveness of their actions. All the children who participated in this study were attending schools where English was the primary medium of instruction. In such classrooms, children may be instructed to provide more referential remarks when narrating events. In Japanese culture, on the other hand, emotions may be an important factor when telling stories, and the subject children might have intuitively understood the cultural emphasis on emotions through interactions with their Japanese mothers at home. Japanese culture, as can be seen in elementary school language textbooks (Gerbert, 1993), tends to encourage "the child to imagine the feelings of another and merge his or her identity with that of the character, even if that character should happen to be an animal" (p. 161). The culture's emphasis, therefore, seems to parallel the narrative strategies taken by the Japanese bilingual children.

In a strict sense, the present study has not determined whether "Different language use causes or at least influences the differences in thinking " or "The common

underlying cognitive system is working in a bilingual's mind." The study, instead, has suggested that each language may access a different set of cultural values. The bilingual children might have thought differently when narrating the same story in the different languages, but the languages per se might not have caused the thinking differences. Rather, the differences observed in the bilinguals' narrative styles might be attributable to the underlying cultural differences. Recognizing the close relationship between culture and language, therefore, this study implies that bilinguals access different cultural systems in their minds when telling the same story in two languages.

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